

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT LESLIE GELB BYLINER, PAGE 8, NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 19, HEADLINED "US WILL PULL OUT PLANES ON TAIWAN: PROCESS, SLATED TO BEGIN IN FALL OR SOONER, LINKED TO RELATIONS WITH PEKING".

2. AMERICAN COMBAT AIRCRAFT WILL BEGIN LEAVING TAIWAN THIS SUMMER OR FALL IN ANOTHER STEP DESIGNED TO IMPROVE WASHINGTON-PEKING RELATIONS AND REMOVE THE VESTIGES OF THE VIETNAM WAR.

3. WHEN THESE AIRCRAFT ARE ALL WITHDRAWN, PERHAPS NEXT YEAR, THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE NO ROUTINE COMBAT PRESENCE IN OR AROUND TAIWAN. ELEMENTS OF THE SEVENTH FLEET STOPPED PATROLING THE TAIWAN STRAITS BETWEEN THE MAINLAND AND TAIWAN ON A REGULAR BASIS IN 1969.

4. SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER IS SAID TO WANT TO START AND COMPLETE THESE AIRCRAFT WITHDRAWALS "SOONER RATHER THAN UNCLASSIFIED

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LATER," WHILE THE CHINESE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT ON TAIWAN

IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE SEEKING DELAYS.

5. THE FULL STORY OF THESE WITHDRAWALS IS STILL CLOAKED IN SECRECY, WITH SOME RANKING OFFICIALS STRESSING ITS SIGNIFICANCE AND SENSITIVITY AND OTHERS INSISTING ON ITS ROUTINE AND EXPECTED NATURE.

6. THE AIRCRAFT -- TWO SQUADRONS OF AMERICAN F-4 PHANTOMS -- WERE RUSHED TO TAIWAN SHORTLY BEFORE THE SIGNING OF THE VIETNAM CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT IN EARLY 1973 IN RETURN FOR TAIWAN'S GIVING SOUTH VIETNAM 48 F-5A FIGHTERS.

7. SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE NOTED. UNDER A NOVEMBER, 1972, AGREEMENT BETWEEN TAIPEI AND WASHINGTON, THE PHANTOMS WERE TO REMAIN ON TAIWAN UNTIL SAIGON AND WASHINGTON REPLACED THE 48 AIRCRAFT. ONE OFFICIAL SAID THE PLANES "WERE PUT ON TAIWAN BECAUSE OF THE VIETNAM WAR AND THEY'RE COMING OUT BECAUSE THE REMNANTS OF THAT WAR ARE BEING CLEARED UP; OUR PUTTING THEM ON TAIWAN HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH PEKING."

8. BUT THIS OFFICIAL AND OTHERS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PHANTOMS IS LINKED TO THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE OF FEBRUARY, 1972, ISSUED AFTER PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT TO PEKING. ACCORDING TO THIS COMMUNIQUE, MR. NIXON MADE A COMMITMENT TO THE "ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF WITHDRAWING ALL UNITED STATES FORCES AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS FROM TAIWAN."

9. THE UNITED STATES WAS TO DO THIS BY PROGRESSIVELY REDUCING "ITS FORCES AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ON TAIWAN AS TENSION IN THE AREA DIMINISHES."

10. TWO OFFICIALS POINTED OUT THAT THE PHANTOMS ARRIVED IN TAIWAN AFTER THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE AND SAID THAT THEIR ULTIMATE WITHDRAWAL WOULD MERELY BRING THE SITUATION BACK TO WHAT IT HAD BEEN.

11. TIMETABLE IS ISSUE. BUT OTHER OFFICIALS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT MR. KISSINGER WAS EAGER FOR THE EARLY WITHDRAWAL.

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DRAWAL OF THE PHANTOMS AS A SIGNAL TO PEKING THAT WASHINGTON WAS INTERESTED IN CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. MR. KISSINGER IS SAID TO BE INTERESTED IN DOING WHAT HE CAN TO STRENGTHEN THE HANDS OF THOSE IN PEKING WHO FEEL THE SAME WAY. THE REMOVAL OF AMERICAN PHANTOMS FROM TAIWAN WOULD GIVE THAT GROUP SOMETHING TANGIBLE TO POINT TO WHEN ARGUING WITH THOSE WHO FEEL THAT PEKING HAS GONE TOO FAR TOO FAST WITH WASHINGTON.

12. THE ISSUE NOW BETWEEN TAIPEI AND WASHINGTON IS OVER WHEN, NOT WHETHER, THE PHANTOMS WILL BE WITHDRAWN. SOUTH VIETNAM IS READY, ACCORDING TO ONE OFFICIAL, TO SHIP BACK 20 F-5A'S TO TAIWAN THIS FALL. THIS WOULD PERMIT THE DEPARTURE OF ONE OF THE TWO PHANTOM SQUADRONS BY OCTOBER AT THE LATEST.

13. TWENTY-EIGHT AIRCRAFT, DESIGNATED BY THE NOVEMBER AGREEMENT TO BE THE NEWER AND MORE CAPABLE F-5E'S, ARE PRESENTLY BEING CO-PRODUCED BY WASHINGTON AND TAIPEI ON TAIWAN. OFFICIALS SAID THESE AIRCRAFT, WHICH WILL STAY IN TAIWAN, SHOULD BE COMPLETED SOMETIME IN 1975.

14. AN F-5E COSTS ABOUT \$1.75 MILLION, MORE THAN TWICE THE PRICE OF AN F-5A. THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER WILL BEAR THE DIFFERENCE IN COST OF THE 28 AIRCRAFT.

15. TWO OFFICIALS SAID THAT NO DATES HAD BEEN SETTLED AS YET FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF EITHER PHANTOM SQUADRON. THEY SAID THERE WERE DISCUSSIONS, NOT NEGOTIATIONS, UNDER WAY.

16. WASHINGTON'S PURPOSE IN ARRANGING THE AIRCRAFT EXCHANGE IN LATE 1972, THE OFFICIALS SAID, WAS TO FILL IN PART THE GAP LEFT BY THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT THAT WERE TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM BY THE TERMS OF THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT. MOREOVER, SINCE THESE AIRCRAFT ARRIVED IN SOUTH VIETNAM PRIOR TO THE CEASE-FIRE, THEY COULD BE REPLACED BY THE UNITED STATES PURSUANT TO THE ONE-FOR-ONE PROVISION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT. OTHER NATIONS INCLUDING IRAN AND SOUTH KOREA ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THIS SWAP.

17. THE UNITED STATES NOW HAS ABOUT 5,000 SERVICEMEN ON UNCLASSIFIED

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TAIWAN, DOWN FROM THE HIGH OF ABOUT 10,000 DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE VIETNAM WAR. WHEN THE PHANTOM SQUADRONS ARE WITHDRAWN, THIS NUMBER WILL BE REDUCED TO ABOUT 3,000, WHO WILL BE ASSIGNED TO A MILITARY ASSISTANCE GROUP, A COMBINED AMERICAN-TAIWAN DEFENSE COMMANDO HEADQUARTERS, AN ARMY MATERIAL AGENCY, AND VARIOUS INTELLIGENCE UNITS. RUSH

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